352

# THE Old Wives Tales: A POEM.

## PART I.

LONDON:
Printed, and Sold by *J. Morphew*, near *Stationers-Hall*. 1712.
Price Three Pence.

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39.
BRITISH MUSEUM

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TO

# *Richard Creſſwell*, Eſq;

## Member of Parliament for *Bridgnorth* in Com' *Salop.*

SIR,

*WOU'D every Man, like Mr.* CRESSWELL, *have laid to Heart the Good of his Country, we ſhou'd not have ſeen the diſmal Effects of one Man's Avarice, I mean a Long and Expenſive War; nor wou'd our Children, to a third and fourth Generation, have been Taxed to aggrandize one Family. The unthinking People, who take things upon Hear-ſay, wou'd have ſeen to the Bottom of their own Affairs, before they were made ſenſible by their Miſeries, they'd not have cry'd up the Man for a God, who is Infamous for his Ingratitude, who has robb'd the Soldiers of their Bread, plunder'd his Country of it's Treaſure, and deprived ſo many of their Husbands, Sons, or Brothers.*

*We ſhou'd not have expended our Blood and Treaſure for ungrateful Allies, nor have*

*been*

*been so fond of Action, as to fight another's Quarrel, where our selves must come in for no other shares than that of Blows, and defraying the Expence of a tedious War. But I forget I am addressing to a Man who, as a true Patriot to his Country, wou'd sacrifice his particular Interest to that of the Publick, at the same time contemning a popular Applause; and the way to disoblige him, is to tell him how he deserves; therefore, Sir, I shan't wound your Modesty, nor do you Injustice, by aiming at your Character, since I can never hope to come up to it.*

*I beg you'll take this Trifle into your Protection; it's the first of my venturing into Print, and as I'm conscious of my own Failings, none can blame me for chusing to shelter my self under so great a Patron.*

*That you may live to Redress the Wrongs of your oppress'd Country, be a Bright Example of Love and Loyalty to your Sovereign, is the daily Prayer of him, who loves you as a Brother, esteems you as the deareſt Friend, and wou'd be proud of an Opportunity to shew the World how much he is*

Your very Humble Servant.

The

# THE Old Wives Tales.

*O L* had juſt with-drawn his Light,
And duſky Clouds brought in the Night;
When round a Block ſome Goſſips ſat,
To paſs the Night in harmleſs Chat.
The Weather's cold, and they prepare
By a large Skreen to keep out Air;
Next is brought in, of Nappy Ale
Two thundring Jacks of Mild and Stale,
Then each prepares to tell her Tale.

Dame *Toſs-pot*, firſt as Eldeſt muſt begin,
A Woman always in a mery Pin,
And who took care ſtill to be Moiſt within.
Knowing we Mortals are no more than Clay,
Which not kept wet would moulder and decay.

Says ſhe, I willingly would wave the Task,
But can't deny whate'er you Goſſips ask.
Then hemming twice, ſhe laid aſide her Pipe,
Gravely her Mouth do's with her Apron wipe.
Firſt ſtir the Fire, bring in another Block,
And let none count the Hours by the Clock;
Or dare to ſay it is high time to part,
Or ſeem to boggle at another Quart.
We're now alone, none can our Actions ſcan,
Then let none Modeſtly deny her Can;
But put it round, and I'll my Tale begin,
I ought to moiſten oft this Shriveld Skin.
Thus ſpoke the Dame, and thus her Story told;
There was a certain Prophecy of Old;
But where it was, truly I have forgot,
Howe'er the Story's true; it matters not
Much for the Country's Name.
(But fie, my Siſters, duſt the Can, for ſhame,
If you'll not Drink, this nipping Weather
May end both me and Tale together.)
Lo then, this Prophecy, this Tale, declares,
Within the ſpace of Ten revolving Years,
Nay it foretels the very Hour,
In which ſhould fall ſo great a Show'r,

It ſhou'd by th'Rroot tear up the largeſt Trees,
And turn dry Land to freſh'n'd Seas,
The ſtrongeſt Bridges ſhou'd o'erthrow,
And where now People walk, there Boats
ſhou'd row.
The heavy'ſt Rocks from Summits ſhou'd be caſt,
And almoſt equal *Noah's* Deluge paſt.
This Rain was ſuch no Mortal hand (ſtand;
Cou'd frame a Cov'ring wou'd it's Force with-
But what was worſe——
There ſtill remain'd a greater Curſe.
For whoſoe'er is wet (the Story's ſad)
By this ſame Rain, does inſtantly run mad.
This Prophecy by all's regardleſs heard,
And but one Mortal or believ'd, or fear'd.
Some ſcoff, and others deem
The Prophecy's a Drunkard's Dream;
And he is thought
A ſuperſtitious Sot
Who gives Belief to what the Prophet wrote.
One Man there was, among this impious Crew
Who liv'd as ev'ry *Chriſtian* ought to do;
This Man in Private for his Country wept,
And Watch'd and Pray'd, while other's Drank
or Slept;

This

This Man wou'd ſtill
Preach the approaching Ill,
And ſhew their Danger with his utmoſt Skill;
But all alas in vain,
There's none but mock his Fruitleſs Pain,
And hoot and jeer him, when he talks of Rain.
The Good Man finds,
That all he ſays, is Preaching to the Winds;
The fatal Day he knows is coming on,
And thinks it fit,
Tho' others had ſo little Wit,
To care at leaſt for one.
With heavy Heart, he quits the Head-ſtrong Rout,
And ſoon a deep and ſpacious Cave finds out.
The minute enter'd, he perceives the Skies,
Settle to Rain, and black'ning Clouds arile,
Which in a while deprive the Earth of Light,
And turn the brighteſt Day to blackeſt Night.
But 'tis not long e'er flaming Sheets ſupply,
That Want, and ſeem to Burn the liquid Sky;
The Thunder roars, and Earth's Foundation ſhakes,
And even th' *Atheiſt* to his Pray'r betakes,
He owns the Deity, and trembling do's implore
Mercy of him, he had deny'd before.

The

The Wind from ev'ry Quarter blew as ſtrong,
As it wou'd roll the looſen'd Globe along;
Houſes it over-ſets, and roots up Trees,
And's follow'd by a Show'r of falling Seas;
As if the *Deluge* were return'd again,
And all Mankind muſt periſh by the Rain.
The time it laſted this good Man withdrew,
And fear'd the ſad Events which wou'd enſue.
The Tempeſt o're,
He warily approach'd his Cavern Door,
To try if he cou'd hear
Ought of thoſe Men who had deſpis'd his Care,
But who can tell
The good Man's Fright, when firſt he quits his Cell,
He thought the Earth become a very Hell,
That *Beelzebub*, and all his Imps together
Had ta'en Poſſeſſion in the laſt foul Weather;
Such horrid Noiſe the pious Hermit hears,
As if the Butchers, Bull-dogs, Bulls and Bears,
Were all together by the Ears;
Or that the Men in *Moorfields* Houſe
Had broke their Chains, and all got looſe.
This was convincing Argument, the Doom
That long had been foretold, at laſt was come.

Alas! says he,
That ever I shou'd live to see
This hapless Kingdom's Misery.
Ah foolish and unthinking Men!
That cou'd contemn
The Heavenly warning! ah, had you been Wise,
Long since the Prophet wou'd have clear'd your Eyes!
The Prophecy was told that you might shun
The endless Woes you willfully brought on.
I'll in the Throng, if God ha'nt left 'em quite,
My good Advice may help to set 'em right.
Then out Zeal for his lov'd Country's Good
He thrusts himself among the Crack-brain'd Croud.
The first he met were Men with heavy Loads,
And two, that followd, prick'd 'em on with Goads;
The senseless Crew with pleasure bore the Weight,
And thought the Burthen added to their State;
They sing their Drivers Praise in every Street,
And lick the Dust from off the Goaders Feet.
He met another who with Age went Double,
Giving himself a deal of Trouble
To make a knotty Broom-stick pace,
Which he bestrid with wond'rous Grace.
Another gives his Waggon many knocks,
And curst the Cart that did not draw the Ox.

He meets a Woman who her Spouſe beſtrides,
And, *Jehu* like, to the next Gallows rides.
He met a Man who threw his Gold away
In hopes of being rich. This Man eats Hay,
His Madneſs tells him that
The only Provender to make him Fat.
A G——ll turns *Baker*,
And who's a *Beau* before, is now a *Quaker*.
There's one untiles the Church, and yet will Swear
The Church's Safety is his only Care.
There one makes Love to a fond aged Dame,
And vows ſhe's Charming, tho both Blind and Lame.
Here's do's he find,
A Crew that willfully are Blind;
They ſhut their Eyes, and at a dreadful Rate
Blaſphem'd the Gods, and curſt their Rigid Fate.
Others there were, to keep themſelves from Weather,
Were cover'd o're with Laces and with Feather.
A Foreign Pedlar, who by chance had heard,
How with the Madmen of this Iſle it far'd,
Fam'd in his Country for a Tongue
As ſmooth as Oyl, and excellently hung;
His Shop at home was known by *Bubble Fair*,
For all the Fops and Fools ſtill center'd there;

This Shop was freighted full with Toys,
Which none wou'd touch, but Lunaticks or Boys;
Hither *Charles Wheedle-Youth*, By-name,
With a huge pack of Trinkets came,
Which he for unknown Profit sold,
And barter'd off his Glass for Gold;
This wou'd buy his Pockets full
(A certain sign of crazy Skull)
Of Pick-tooths, Penknives, Bottles, Scissars,
Nut-cracks, Boxes, Tablets, Visars;
Another he'll lay out his Cash,
In Sword-Knots, Garters, and such Trash,
Fine polisht Buckles, Seals cut in Glass,
And swops a pound of Oar for so much Brass;
A third Man raps right Silver for meer Dross,
A fourth gives Jewels for a Hobby Horse.
This the good Man with patience cou'd not see,
But wept for their Infirmity;
He pities much the Brainless Rakes,
And thus with weeping Eyes, the Crew bespeaks;
Alas my Friends, 'tis not as yet,
A many Days, since ye were fam'd for Wit;
This Isle was lookt upon for Arts
A Nursery, and for Men of Parts.

O hear

O hear him then, who with juſt Sorrow ſpeaks,
And ſtrive to leave theſe idle Freaks,
Conſider in the end
A ſure Deſtruction muſt your ways attend,
Then mind, I pray, the Counſel of a Friend.
Ah! be calm a while, and quit this Riot,
I have great hopes a temperate Diet,
With Loſs of little Blood,
May much contribute to your Good;
For God's ſake give a Minutes time to Thought,
Conſider, if you can, what Woes you've brought
Upon your ſelves, Ah! then prepare
To beg of God your Wits again by Prayer.
Who hopes that Senſe will work on ſuch as theſe,
May think with Oyſter Shells to lave the Seas.
This Speech, like Oyl that's thrown upon the Fire,
Inſtead of quenching, makes the Flame riſe higher.
From whence this Madman, that's come here to preach,
And wiſer than himſelf pretends to teach?
By whoſe Commiſſion do you read your Lecture,
And ſet up here for our chief Director?
By what pretenſions can you boaſt,
More Wit than we, that you muſt rule the roaſt?
Begon, thou Idle Sot, fly, quit thy Boaſting,
Or we ſhall truſs thy goodly Corps for roaſting,

Some

Some threaten they'll dash out his Brains,
Who for their Good took so much pains.
The good Man finds it to his cost,
That all he says, is Labour lost;
Resolv'd, he to his quitted Cave repairs,
To spend his Life in Solitude and Prayers.
Says Mother *Toss-pot*, now my Tale
Is at an End, pray reach the Ale;
And some of you unfold,
The Moral of the Story told:
They spent two hours of the Night,
In guessing round, but none guest right;
At last crys *Toss-pot*, ease your Brains
Since you gues wide, with all your Pains:
I will my self the Tale explain,
Since all I find do Gues in vain.
By the Rain is meant God's Rage,
On those who Impiously engage
Their Sovereign Lord, and bring him to a Stage;
His Blood falls heavy on us, and we must
Expect a Scourge, if we believe God just:
We are the Madmen, we are those who bear
The heavy Load, and hold the Men most dear
Who lay 'em on, we tamely bear the Weight
Of heavy Taxes, to make our Drivers great;

We're

We're truly Mad, with pleaſure ſhut our Eyes,
And hug the Man that ſells us to Allies;
The *Whigs* are thoſe who did the Church untile,
And cry'd for Church's Safety all the while;
Thoſe who threw their Caſh away,
In hopes of being Rich, are thoſe who pay
For a continued War, and hope to get
What none of any Senſe e're dreamt of yet;
*M———o*'s the Man, has found us all Crackt-brain'd,
And for few *Rags*, has all our Purſes drain'd:
The Man who gave Advice, I need not tell,
There's not an *Engliſh-man* but knows him well;
They all applaud the Dame, and then demand
Dame *Chuckle*'s Tale, who did not long withſtand,
Their juſt Requeſt,
But told the foll'wing out of hand.

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# Dame *Chuckle*'s TALE.

A Dog who oft was known to bite,
Without regard to Friend or Foe,
Who never ſtood on wrong or right,
Whether in wantonneſs or ſpight,
Truly, I can't reſolve to Night;

But

But all he met were ſure to know,
He did not wear his Teeth for ſhow.

*Towzer* long time had liv'd thus lewdly;
And treated Neighbours all ſo rudely,
At laſt at Bar is forc'd to ſtand,
And Felon-like hold up his hand;
His Courſe of Life is ta'en in pieces,
And Evidence apace increaſes.

One being Sworn, he did depoſe,
That *Towzer* ſpoil'd his Sunday Cloaths;
As he was paſſing by to Church,
The Dog (it ſeems upon the lurch)
Flew out in Rage, the Plantiff threw
In Kennel-Dirt without more a doe.

Another Plaintiff then appear'd,
Who Hemming thrice, and ſtroaking Beard;
With look Serene, did thus declare,

It was not Malice brought him there,
'Twas only for the Publick Good,
That he in Court Complainant ſtood;
For certain 'tis we muſt correct,
*Towzer*'s ill Life, he muſt be check'd,
Or in a while he wou'd o're-run,
And miſchief ev'ry Mothers Son:

360

Then wou'd follow this Diſaſter,
He'd be too great for us to maſter;
As I know who; but let that paſs,
I'm coming now to *Towzer*'s Caſe,
Who with great Force run thro' my Legs,
Threw up my Heels, and broke my Eggs;
Which I for Family Support,
To Market carry'd; but his Sport
I find, whenever he thinks fitting,
Muſt be preferr'd to Childrens eating;
This is no Fable, and my truſt is
This goodly Court will do me Juſtice.

A third Man Swore, and he ſwore right,
*Towzer* put him in ſuch a plight,
(Occaſion'd by the ſudden fright)
Made him Obnoxious all that Night;
He ne're was uſed to make fine Speeches,
But hop'd the Laws
Wou'd find a Clauſe,
Where *Towzer* ſhou'd,
As reaſon good,
Be made to pay for damag'd Breeches.

The Evidence came in ſo faſt,
That Pleading's vain, the Dog is Caſt;

The Judge then riſing from his place,
Said, *Towzer*, 'tis a ſpecial Grace,
Thou art not Hang'd, how'ere we hope
Thou wilt repent and ſcape the Rope;
This is the only reaſon why,
For firſt Indictment Thieves don't die.

But leſt hereafter you forget,
You have receiv'd this Benefit;
Or leſt you do what ſtill much worſe is,
Perſiſt in theſe your wicked Courſes;
With hopes to make all others ſhun,
The lawleſs Actions you have done;
We round your Neck this Halter place,
Which you muſt Wear, and all your Race,
Your Mate, your Self, your Son, your Daughter,
And all your Whelps that ſhall come after.

The Dog with Sighs receiv'd the Sentence,
And unfeign'd ſhew of true Repentance,
Hung down his Head, and much dejected,
On his loſt Happineſs reflected;
The Sentence juſt, the Curr declares,
And patiently the Halter bears.

From Father unto Son it paſt,
But th' Infamy's forgot at laſt;

And they of Third or Fourth Gen'ration,
Wore the Rope with Oſtentation:
With Ribbons, Laces, Feathers, ſtore
Of rich Perfumes, they trim'd it o're;
Proud in their Shame, they Strut and Huff,
And think the World not large enough,
Fancy the Rope, Perfum'd and Deck't,
Muſt cauſe from all, profound Reſpect.
But *Sly*, a Dog of great diſcerning,
Who famous was for depth of Learning,
A Dog who equal Temper bore,
Tho' this day Rich, the next day poor:
Who never wou'd allow Detraction,
In Traders Countenance Exaction;
He would to none deny Aſſiſtance,
Or Preach the Law of King-reſiſtance,
He well was vers'd in old Tradition,
And fully bent to check th' Ambition,
Of *Towzer*'s Off-ſpring, which he found,
Made 'em deſpis'd the Country round,
Whiſper'd 'em how the Halter came,
And that they glory'd in their Shame.
This Moral, Siſters, points at thoſe,
Whoſe Anceſtors by baſe Oppreſſion roſe;

As when a Man who has betray'd his King,
Is made a Lord, or ſome more haughty thing:
Thinks his Titles make his Crimes but ſlight,
Or can efface 'em quite,
When they but ſet 'em in a fairer Sight.
God is the Judge, and he does Titles place,
Which we think Honours, tho' they 're meant Diſgrace.

Th' approve the Dame, and then all ask
Dame *Tattle*'s Tale, who thus begin her Task.

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# Dame *Tattle*'s TALE.

COmplaining thus, a half ſtarv'd Lad,
Trudg'd thro' the Rugged way,
With filthy Rags his Trembling Body clad,
And with Bare-feet he preſt the Frozen Clay;
Poor hapleſs Wretch! when will thy Sorrows end?
Where canſt thou Shelter find?
Thy Parents loſt, thou 'rt left without a Friend,
Pinch'd thro' with Cold, and by thy Hunger pin'd;
Ah! happy had I been, if that curſt Night
Had been my laſt, in which I firſt ſaw Light:
Naked and Poor, expos'd to Cold and Rain,
Of all Misfortunes, I've a double ſhare
To Beaſts I may, as well as Men complain,

There's none, alas, will lend a pitying Ear;
Warm and well-fed themselves, they do not mind
The Woes I bear, expos'd to Frosts and Wind;
There's not a Wretch on Earth like me forlorn,
My Miseries they make their Jest,
They look upon my Want and Rags with Scorn;
Nor will they give me Straw whereon to Rest.
Under some well-spread Oak I make my Bed,
The fallen Leaves are now my only Sheets,
Upon the knotty Roots I lay my Head:
Whilst on my Back the angry Tempest beats.
Happy, thrice happy, Beasts that graze the Field,
Nature for you, a full Provision yields;
Arm'd with your Skins, you dread no threatning Sky,
The Earth prevents your Wants, whilst I,
A miserable Wretch with Cold and Hunger die.
A Merchant who by chance pass'd by,
Sees his Condition with a pitying Eye;
The melancholy Object peirc't his Heart,
Nor can he well refrain his gushing Tears
He feels his Grief, he shudders at his Smart,
His anguish't Soul the Wretch's Sorrow shares,
He asks the Lad, the Place from whence he came,
Whither he went, and what his Parents Name?

Parents and Home I've none, (the Boy reply'd)
Long ſince my Mother, late my Father dy'd;
Our Landlord ſeiz'd on all, the Cloaths I wore,
He ſtript me of, and turn'd me out of door:
Naked i'th Fields I lay, ſtripp'd to the Skin,
And not a Neighbour round would take me in;
A pitty'ng Plowman gave the Rags I wear,
Heavens reward him for his pious Care.
Depriv'd of Friends, I'm by the Pariſh left,
Of ev'ry thing but of my hopes bereft;
By Hunger ſtarv'd, with Cold I'm almoſt Dead,
Nor know I how to get a Cruſt of Bread;
This is my Caſe, but I alas forget,
To tell my Name, it is (good Sir) *Moreyet*:
My Courſe I leave to Providence to ſteer,
And now am going, Sir, I know not where.
Some Charitable Man I've hopes to meet,
Who'll for my willing Service let me eat.

The pious Man who never with dry Eyes,
Saw others wants, thus to the Lad replies,
He ne're can fail that on his God relies;
See Heaven now has rais'd you up a Friend,
I'll take you Home, here may your Sorrows end:
Give God the Thanks, that God who does provide,
For thoſe who on his Providence rely'd;

The good Man's Heart for the poor Wand'rer bled,
He bids him mount the Horſe his Servant led;
As you behave your ſelf in me, depend,
You'll find, an angry Maſter, or a loving Friend.
With bended Knees the Boy his Patron bleſt,
And floods of Tears his riſing Joys expreſt;
May heavy'ſt Plagues (ſays he) my Life attend,
May Heaven the bittereſt Judgments ſhew
Upon my Head, may God's juſt Rage deſcend,
When other than your Int'reſt I've in view,
No, deareſt Maſter, you ſhall ever find,
Poor as I am, I have a grateful Mind;
Moſt willingly my Life for you I'de ſtake,
And think I'm bleſt in dying for your ſake.
*Moreyet* now mounted, eas'd his ſore-gall'd Feet,
And before Night they reach'd the Merchant's Seat;
Where with Abundance all his Wants ſupply'd,
His Patron for his Belly, and his Back provides.
The Boy's obſequious Diligence ſoon won
His Maſter's heart, who brought him up to Town;
He puts him out to School, and when he's fit,
Finding him Maſter of a ready Wit,
Employs him in his Books; the next advance,
He ſends him as his Factor into *France*;

The good Man little thought he e're shou'd see,
The Man he rais'd his open Enemy:
So far from that, when *Moreyet* does return,
He treats him almost equal with his Son.
Wou'd you not think it strange, this Man at last,
Forgetting all his Patron's Kindness past,
Shou'd seek his Life, his Secrets shou'd betray,
And with base Treachery his Care repay.

But Friends, methinks I see the dawning Light,
My Story's much too long to end it quite,
So shall defer it till to morrow Night.
Bring in, says *Toss-pot* then a stirrup Cup,
It's fit we drink, my Girls, at Breaking up;
But let's conclude where we to morrow meet.
Says *Goody Tattle*, i'll to morrow treat;
My Ale's as fine as Amber, and our Rector
Says, it's as good as one *Sam Rose*'s Nectar;
But what that Nectar is, I can't find out,
Some costly Wine, that's very good no doubt.
They all agree the following Night to spend,
At *Tattle*'s House and there the Story end.

*FINIS.*